SURAH OF AL-A’LA

THE RESEARCH:
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AL-A’LA

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THE REFERENCES

1) https://iqra-quran.com/chapters-of-quran/87-al-ala/

2) https://quran.com/87

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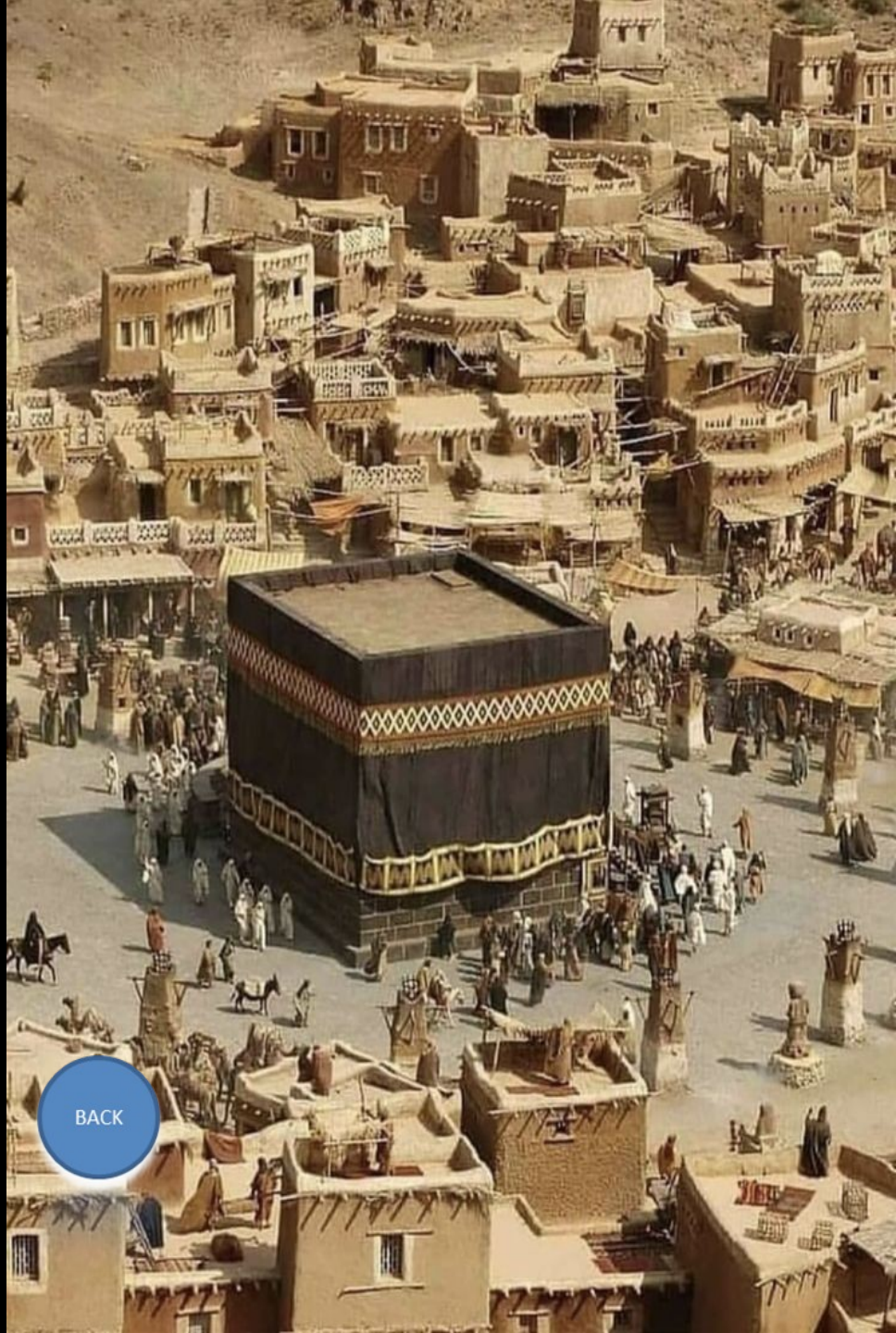
THE BACKGROUND 1

Its Name

- **Surah Name:** Al-A‘la (سـورة الـأعلى)
  Translation: The Most High
  Origin of name: The Surah takes its name from the word “Al-A‘la” (The Most High) mentioned in the first verse. It is also known as "Sabbih" because of its opening command, "Sabbih isma rabbika al-a‘la" ("Glorify the name of your Lord, the Most High").
- **Surah Number:** 87
  Number of Ayahs (Verses): 19

Revelation Period

- Makki or Madani: Makki
  Approximate Time of Revelation: Ea rly Makkan period



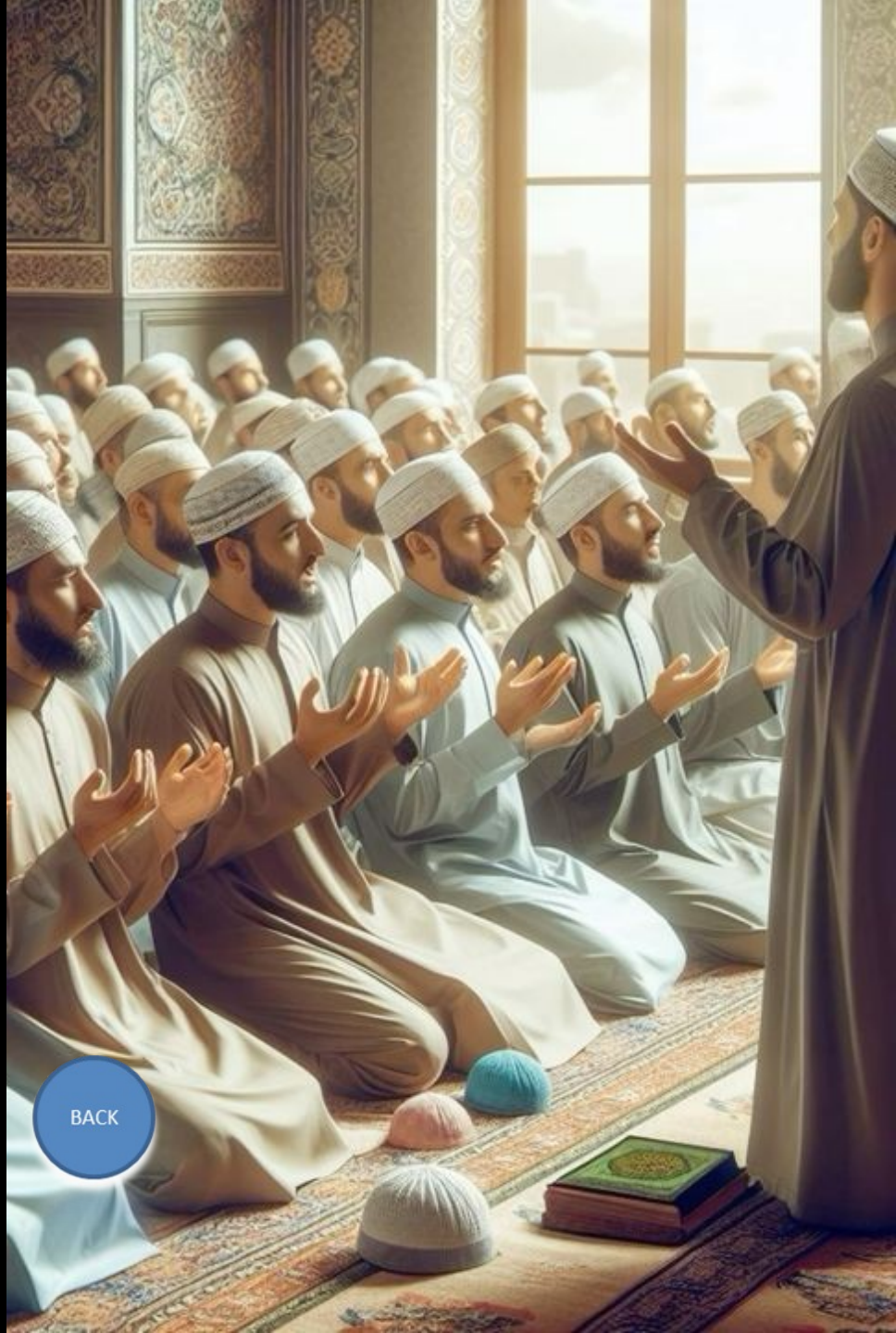
Historical Context

- Surah Al-A‘la was revealed in Makkah during a time when the Muslim community was still in its early stages. This period was marked by the widespread pagan belief in multiple gods and general ignorance (referred to as the Jahiliyyah period). People worshiped multiple gods, attributed human traits to deities, and lacked a proper understanding of monotheism and divine transcendence.

- In this context, Surah Al-A‘la came as a spiritual and theological correction, calling people to recognize the unique and exalted nature of Allah. It emphasized His role as the sole Creator, Sustainer, and Guide, contrasting the pure understanding of God in Islam with the distorted views held by people of other faiths at the time.

- Another notable aspect of this period was the marginalization and ridicule faced by the early Muslims. They were still a small, vulnerable group without political or social support. Thus, Surah Al-A‘la also served as a source of comfort and encouragement. It reminded believers of Allah’s power over creation and His control over life and destiny, providing reassurance in the face of adversity.

- The early Makkan period was also characterized by short, rhythmic surahs such as Al-A‘la were effective in message delivery and memorization. The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is reported to have loved this surah deeply, and frequently recited it during important prayers like Jumu‘ah (Friday) and Eid.



- It is reported that just as he advised saying “Subḥāna rabbiyal-ʿaẓīm” (“Glory be to my Lord, the Most Great”) in bowing (rukūʿ) after the revelation of the verse "So exalt the name of your Lord, the Most Great" (56:96) in Surah Al-Waqi’a, he also commanded saying “Subḥāna rabbiyal-aʿlā” (“Glory be to my Lord, the Most High”) in prostration (sujūd) because this surah begins with the verse "Sabbih isma rabbika al-a‘la” (Exalt the name of your Lord, the Most High.)

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Main Topics 1

BACK

Glorification of Allah the Most High:

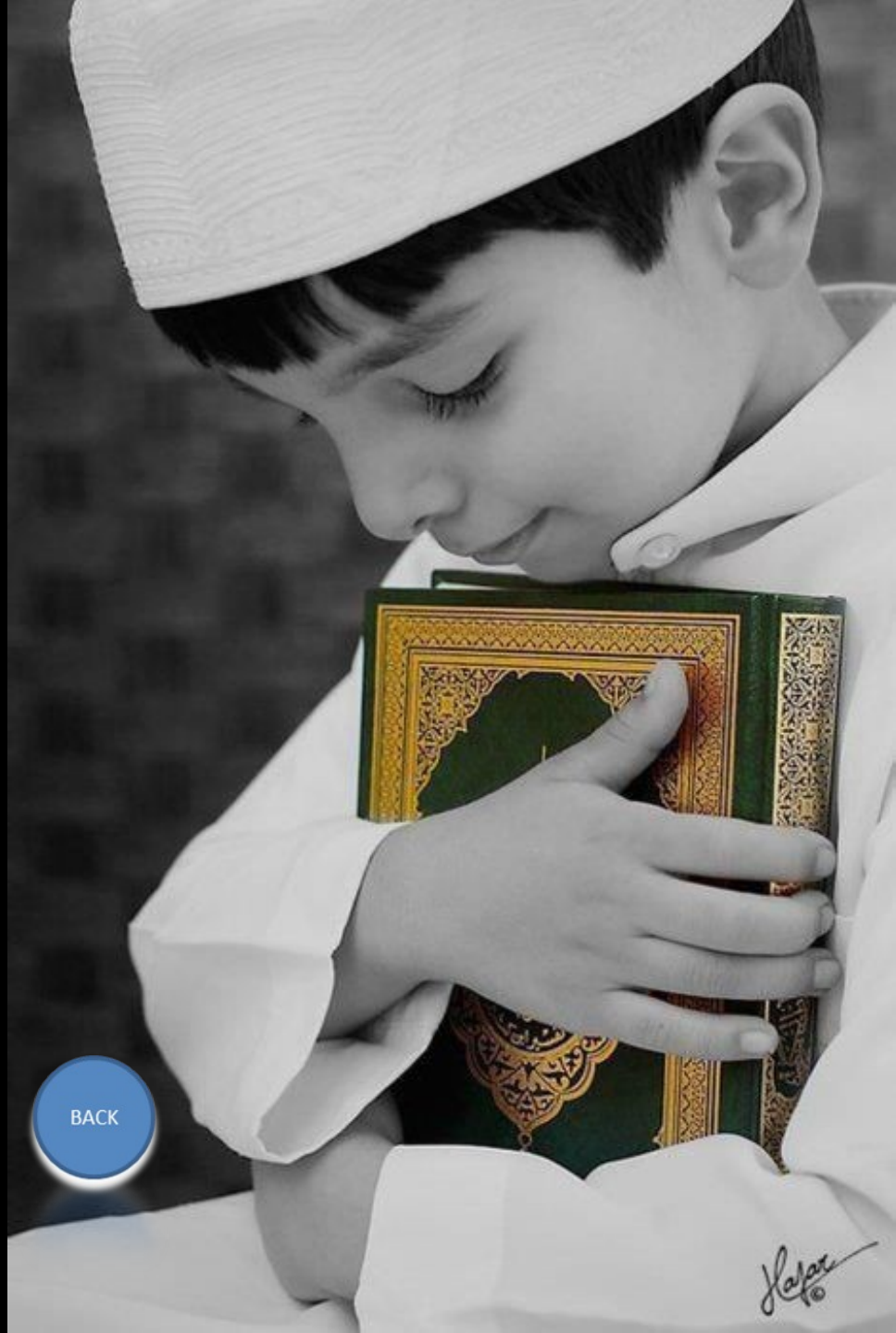
- The surah begins with a call to glorify the name of Allah, the Most High. It reminds believers to recognize the greatness and holiness of Allah, who is far above any imperfection or comparison.

Signs of Allah's Power in Creation:

- The next verses describe Allah's power through His creation. He creates everything, designs it perfectly, gives things their purpose, and guides them. Examples from nature, like green pastures turning into dry waste, show His control over life and change.

Qur'an as a Divine Gift and its Easy Memorization:

- The surah assures that Allah made it easy for the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) to learn and never forget the Qur’an. This highlights the miraculous nature of the Qur’an and its preservation in the hearts of believers.



Reminder of the Hereafter Over Worldly Life:

- A clear warning is given that those who turn away from Allah will suffer, but those who fear Him and live righteously will succeed in the Hereafter. The afterlife is described as better and more lasting than the short pleasures of this world.

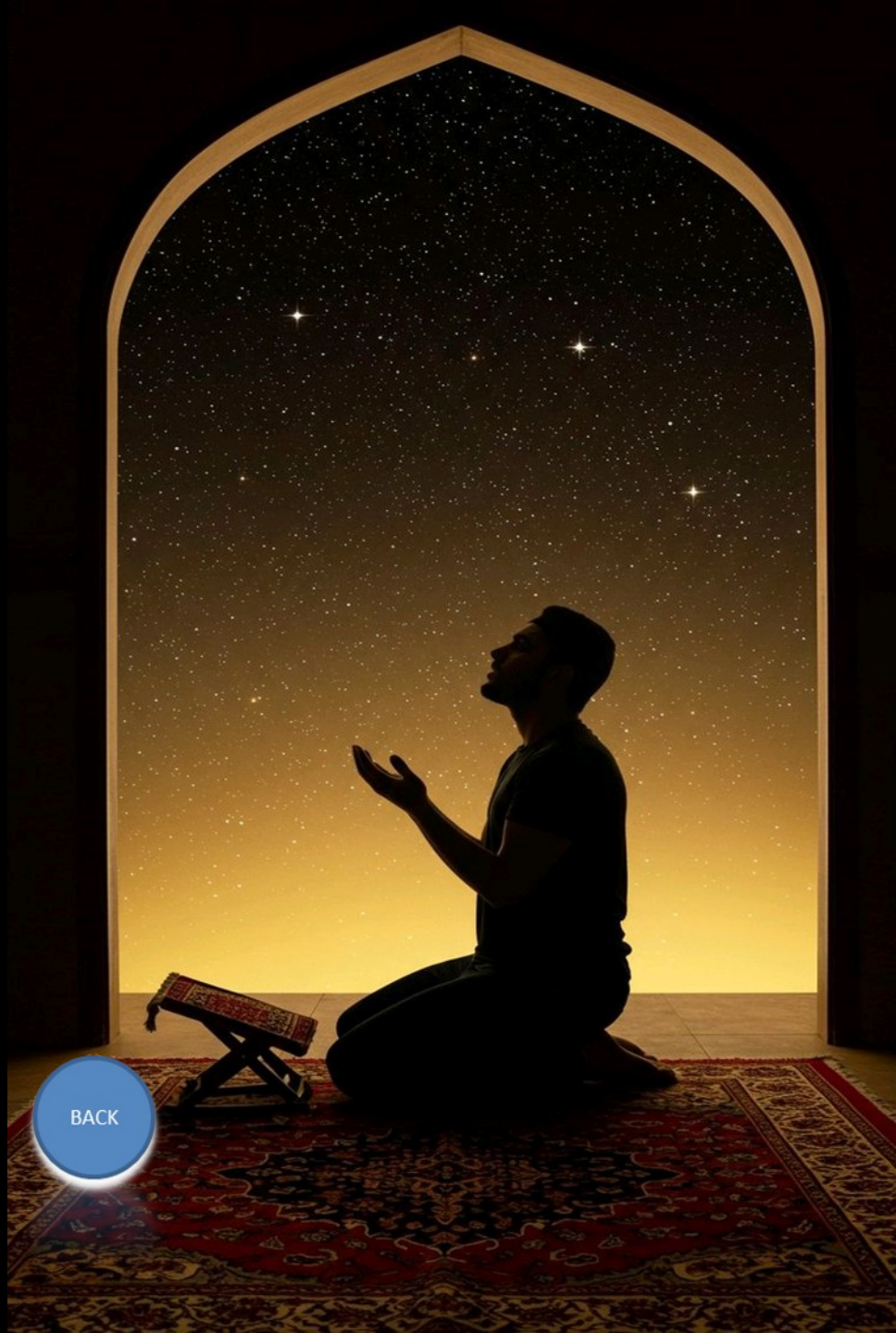
Consistency with Previous Revelations:

- The surah ends by confirming that its message is not new. Belief in the Hereafter and the greatness of Allah was also taught in the earlier scriptures, such as in those of Abraham and Moses.

Key lessons

- Always glorify the name of your Lord who is Most High and Perfect.
- The world is temporary; the afterlife is better and everlasting.
- The Quran is easy to remember by Allah’s will.

- The message of this Surah matches the teachings of earlier prophets like Ibrahim and Musa.
- Not all who hear the truth will follow it; only those with a pure heart will benefit.



THE AYAT IN DETAILS 2

سَبِّحِ ٱسْمَ رَبِّكَ ٱلْأَعْلَى ١

Glorify the Name of your Lord, the Most High,

BACK

الَّذِي خَلَقَ فَسَوَّىٰ ﴿٢﴾

Who created and perfectly fashioned all,

BACK

سَبِّحِ ٱسْمَ رَبِّكَ ٱلْأَعْلَى ﴿١﴾ ٱلَّذِى خَلَقَ فَسَوَّىٰ ﴿٢﴾ وَٱلَّذِى قَدَّرَ فَهَدَىٰ ﴿٣﴾ وَٱلَّذِىٓ أَخْرَجَ ٱلْمَرْعَىٰ ﴿٤﴾ فَجَعَلَهُۥ غُثَآءً أَحْوَىٰ ﴿٥﴾ سَنُقْرِئُكَ

and Who ordained precisely and inspired accordingly,

BACK

وَٱلَّذِىٓ أَخۡرَجَ ٱلۡمَرۡعَىٰ ٤

and Who brings forth [green] pasture,

BACK

فَجَعَلَهُۥ غُثَآءً أَحۡوَىٰ ٥

then reduces it to withered chaff.

BACK

We will have you recite the Quran, O Prophet, so you will not forget any of it,

BACK

إِلَّا مَا شَآءَ ٱللَّهُ ۚ إِنَّهُۥ يَعْلَمُ ٱلْجَهْرَ وَمَا يَخْفَىٰ ٧

unless Allah wills otherwise.1 He surely knows what is open and what is hidden.

Footnote - 1

Meaning, We will have you memorize the revelations and apply the rulings contained in them, unless one ruling is replaced by another.

فَلَا تَنسَىٰٓ ٦ إِلَّا مَا شَآءَ ٱللَّهُ ۚ إِنَّهُۥ يَعْلَمُ ٱلْجَهْرَ وَمَا يَخْفَىٰ ٧ وَنُيَسِّرُكَ
لِلْيُسْرَىٰ ٨ فَذَكِّرْ إِن نَّفَعَتِ ٱلذِّكْرَىٰ ٩ سَيَذَّكَّرُ مَن يَخْشَىٰ ١٠

We will facilitate for you the Way of Ease.1

Footnote - 1

The Islamic way of life which brings about ease in this life and salvation in the next.

BACK

فَذَكِّرْ إِن نَّفَعَتِ ٱلذِّكْرَىٰ ﴿٩﴾

So alwaysremind withthe Quranevenif the reminder is beneficialonly to some.

BACK

سَيَذَّكَّرُ مَن يَخْشَىٰ ﴿١٠﴾

Those in awe [of Allah] will be mindful [of it].

BACK

وَيَتَجَنَّبُهَا ٱلْأَشْقَى ﴿١١﴾

But it will be shunned by the most wretched,

BACK

الَّذِي يَصْلَى النَّارَ الْكُبْرَىٰ ﴿١٢﴾

who will burn in the greatest Fire,

BACK

وَيَتَجَنَّبُهَا ٱلْأَشْقَى ﴿١١﴾ ٱلَّذِى يَصْلَى ٱلنَّارَ ٱلْكُبْرَىٰ ﴿١٢﴾ ثُمَّ لَا يَمُوتُ
فِيهَا وَلَا يَحْيَىٰ ﴿١٣﴾ قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَن تَزَكَّىٰ ﴿١٤﴾ وَذَكَرَ ٱسْمَ رَبِّهِۦ فَصَلَّىٰ ﴿١٥﴾

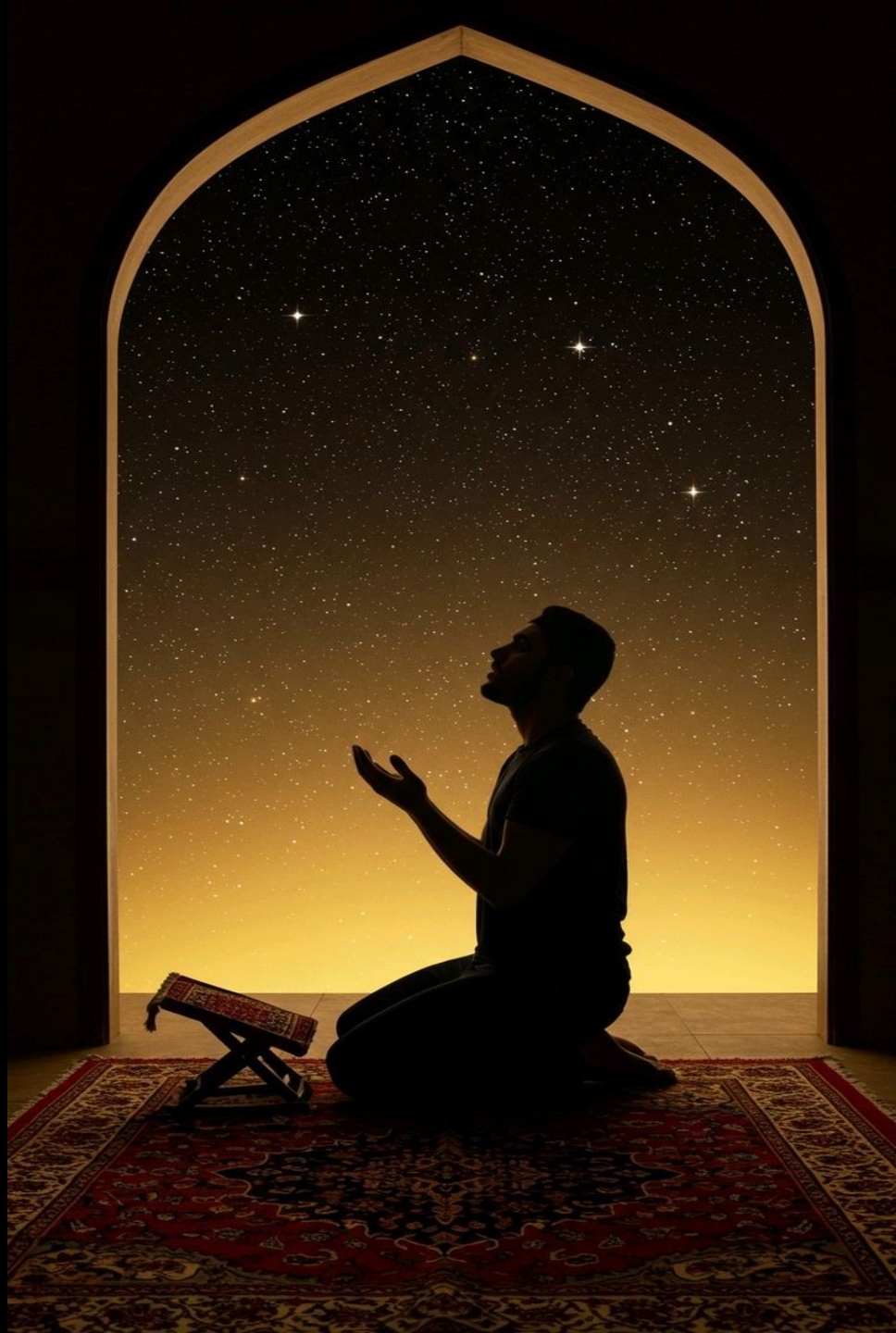
where they will not be able to live or die.

BACK

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَن تَزَكَّىٰ ١٤

Successful indeed are those who purify themselves,

BACK



وَذَكَرَ ٱسْمَ رَبِّهِۦ فَصَلَّىٰ ﴿١٥﴾

remember the Name of their Lord, and pray.

BACK

بَلْ تُؤْثِرُونَ ٱلْحَيَوٰةَ ٱلدُّنْيَا ﴿١٦﴾

But you deniers only prefer the life of this world,

BACK

وَٱلْـَٔاخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَىٰٓ ﴿١٧﴾

even though the Hereafter is far better and more lasting.

BACK

بَلْ تُؤْثِرُونَ ٱلْحَيَوٰةَ ٱلدُّنْيَا ﴿١٦﴾ وَٱلْءَاخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَىٰٓ ﴿١٧﴾ إِنَّ
هَٰذَا لَفِى ٱلصُّحُفِ ٱلْأُولَىٰ ﴿١٨﴾ صُحُفِ إِبْرَٰهِيمَ وَمُوسَىٰ ﴿١٩﴾

This is certainly mentioned in the earlier Scriptures—

BACK

صُحُفِ إِبْرَٰهِيمَ وَمُوسَىٰ ﴿١٩﴾

the Scriptures
of Abraham
and Moses.

BACK

EXCERCISES
BACK

1. Rememberi ng (Recall)

1. What is the meaning of the word *Al-A‘lā*?
2. How many verses are in Surah Al-A‘lā?
3. Is Surah Al-A‘lā Makki or Madani?
4. What are the first words of the surah?
5. Which attributes of Allah are mentioned in the first four verses?
6. What natural phenomena are described in the surah?
7. Who is promised remembrance of the message?
8. What happens to the one who turns away from the reminder?
9. Which earlier scriptures are mentioned at the end of the surah?
10. Whose scriptures are specifically referred to?

2. Understanding (Comprehension)

1. Explain what “Glorify the Name of your Lord, the Most High” means.
2. How do the verses describe Allah’s power in creation?
3. Why does the surah mention the stages of plant growth?
4. What is the connection between guidance and creation in the surah?
5. Explain the contrast between the successful and the miserable person.
6. Why is purification linked with success?
7. What is meant by “preferring the worldly life”?
8. How does the surah reassure the Prophet regarding revelation?
9. Why are previous scriptures mentioned at the end?

3. Applying

1. How can a Muslim apply the command to glorify Allah in daily life?
2. What practical steps can help a person “purify himself”?
3. How can remembering Allah regularly protect someone from failure?
4. How does understanding that Allah controls creation increase trust (tawakkul)?
5. In what ways can we avoid preferring the worldly life over the Hereafter?
6. How can this surah be used in giving advice to someone distracted by dunya?

4. Analyzing

1. Analyze the structure of the surah — how do the themes progress?
2. What is the relationship between creation and revelation in this surah?
3. Compare the characteristics of the successful and unsuccessful individuals.
4. Why does the surah move from natural signs to human accountability?
5. Examine the logical flow between glorification, revelation, reminder, and outcome.
6. What rhetorical effect is created by contrasting الدنيا (worldly life) and الآخرة (Hereafter)?

5. Evaluating

1. Why is this surah effective as a reminder for believers?
2. Evaluate the impact of believing that Allah has measured and guided everything.
3. Why might people still prefer the worldly life despite knowing it is temporary?
4. Assess the importance of purification in achieving true success.
5. Why do you think this surah was frequently recited in prayers by the Prophet ﷺ?
6. How does this surah strengthen belief in divine wisdom?

6. Creating (Higher-Order Thinking)

1. Design a short khutbah outline based on the main themes of Surah Al-A‘lā.
2. Write a reflection connecting this surah to modern life challenges.
3. Create a mind map showing the main concepts of the surah.
4. Develop a daily action plan inspired by this surah.
5. Compose a short motivational paragraph based on the message of the surah.
6. Propose a classroom activity to teach the themes of Surah Al-A‘lā effectively.

و الحمد لله رب العالمين